



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960
January 12, 2015

Mr. Brian D. Wittick, Chief
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Projects Branch 2
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

SUBJ: EPA Review and Comments
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement
For License Renewal of Nuclear Plants,
Supplement 50 regarding
Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1 (GGNS)
CEQ No. 20140353

Dear Mr. Wittick:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 reviewed the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 50, (FGSEIS), regarding the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1, (GGNS) NUREG-1437, November 2014. We appreciate your coordination with us.

This FGSEIS is the result of Entergy Operations, Inc. (Entergy) submitting a request to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to renew the operating license for an additional 20 years for the GGNS in Claiborne County, Mississippi. GGNS was granted an extended power uprate (EPU) by the NRC on July 18, 2012, making it the largest single-unit nuclear power plant in the U.S., and fifth largest in the world. An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were published in 2012, related to the license amendment request for an EPU. The Draft Generic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DGSEIS) for the license renewal was published in November 2013. EPA Region 4 reviewed and commented on this document via comment letter dated February 26, 2014. We appreciate your responses to our comments on the DGSEIS, which are included in Appendix A of this FGSEIS. The FGSEIS contains an updated discussion of the Commission's rulemaking action, and evaluation of the environmental impacts associated with the continued storage of spent nuclear fuel.

The GGNS Unit 1 is a single-cycle, forced-circulation, General Electric Mark III boiling water reactor (BWR). The proposed action is to issue a renewed power reactor operating license, since the existing license for the GGNS will expire on November 1, 2024. The NRC's Federal action is the decision whether or not to renew the license for an additional 20 years. The NRC staff

concluded that the environmental impacts of the renewal of the operating license would be smaller than those of feasible and commercially viable alternatives for energy production, and that the continued operation of GGNS is the environmentally preferred alternative.

For the renewal of a license, Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 51.95(c)) states that the NRC shall prepare a Supplemental EIS which is a supplement to previously conducted Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). The DGSEIS and the current FGSEIS serve to meet this requirement, and include an analysis that evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed action of relicensing GGNS Unit 1.

Based on EPA's review, there are some remaining environmental concerns. In particular, spent nuclear fuel storage, transportation and disposition, and radionuclides in groundwater are issues that will require continued monitoring as the project progresses. The FGSEIS also notes that the reported tritium concentrations significantly decreased in many onsite monitoring wells by the end of 2013, and that all were below the EPA drinking water standard for tritium, and that monitoring is ongoing. Regarding facility aging, we note that the NRC staff's safety evaluation is continuing, and that a final report is pending.

In conclusion, the FGSEIS provides useful information for assessment of the proposal to relicense GGNS Unit 1, and we appreciate your responses to our comments regarding the DGSEIS. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. Please send us a copy of the Record of Decision (ROD) when it becomes available. If you have any questions, contact Ramona McConney of my staff at 404-562-9615.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Mueller", with a stylized, cursive script.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Resource Conservation and Restoration Division

Cc: David Drucker, NRC, Senior Project Manager